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2026 TOWN ELECTIONS

Donald Bradford - Precinct 8

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COURTESY PHOTO/DONALD BRADFORD

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What experiences and perspectives would you contribute to Town Meeting?

I bring to Town Meeting a combination of long-term local commitment and senior-level executive leadership experience. I have served as a Town Meeting Member since 2011, representing Precinct 8 through school construction projects, zoning discussions, override votes, housing proposals, and budget deliberations. That continuity matters. It allows me to understand not just individual articles, but how decisions compound over time and shape Winchester's fiscal health and character.

Over the past three years, one of my most significant contributions has been serving on the Government Rules Committee during the decennial review of all town rules and regulations. This was a comprehensive, detailed evaluation of how our governing framework functions focusing on identifying outdated provisions, clarifying language, improving consistency, and strengthening transparency. The majority of the committee's recommendations were adopted at Town Meeting, reflecting broad agreement that governance should evolve thoughtfully and deliberately. That experience reinforced my belief that good government requires both discipline and collaboration.

What are two or three issues facing Winchester that you think are most important and what are your positions on them?

1. Affordable Housing and Thoughtful Development (especially along North Main Street)

Winchester is grappling with how to expand housing opportunities while preserving the character, walkability, and historic fabric that make our town special. The North Main Street corridor has been identified in the Winchester 2030 Master Plan and Planning Board studies as a key opportunity area for mixed-use, contextual redevelopment that c
support housing diversity, economic activity, and a vibrant town center.

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My position: Winchester needs development that meaningfully expands affordable housing opportunities, but it must be done with sensitivity to context, infrastructure capacity, and community values. We can and should:

Support smart redevelopment that increases housing supply. Especially units affordable to moderate earners without sacrificing the human-scaled character of our downtown and neighborhoods.

Insist on design quality, thoughtful massing, and community benefits (public space, streetscape improvements, active ground-floor uses) so that density complements, rather than overwhelms, our town center.

Use zoning tools and incentives to align private development with public priorities like affordability and accessibility.

In short, we should be pro-housing and pro-Winchester character. I do not believe that this is an either/or choice.

2. Fiscal Responsibility and the Upcoming Override Vote

Winchester faces structural fiscal pressures driven by rising costs for schools, health insurance, capital maintenance backlogs, and the limitations of Proposition 2½. The upcoming override will directly impact the services residents value, from public safety to education, infrastructure, and long-term bond ratings. At the same time, voters are rightly concerned about affordability for homeowners, particularly in a market where property tax burdens are already high.

My position: I support a responsible, transparent override that:

Is based on a clear articulation of needs including both operating capital with data and scenarios that residents can evaluate. Meets our core

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service obligations (education, safety, maintenance) while building fiscal sustainability into the future and includes strong accountability and reporting back to residents on how override funds are spent.

We must balance the necessity of adequate funding for essential town services with the very real impact on taxpayers. Winchester's AAA credit rating and sound fiscal practices give us leverage to plan responsibly, but we should not take that credit for granted nor should we avoid necessary investment.

What is a special challenge in your precinct that might not be faced in other precincts?

One ongoing challenge in Precinct 8 is civic engagement. Historically, our precinct has had lower voter turnout in town elections compared to other parts of Winchester. A significant factor is that we have a higher proportion of renters and more transient residents than many other precincts. When residents feel temporary or less connected to local government, participation often declines.

That presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

Precinct 8 is diverse in housing type, income level, and life stage from long-time homeowners to young families to residents in multifamily buildings. That diversity strengthens our town, but it also requires more intentional outreach and communication. Town Meeting decisions directly affect everyone in the precinct property taxes, housing development, school construction impacts, zoning, infrastructure, and services whether someone owns their home or rents it.

An informed and participating citizenry benefits all of us. Strong civic engagement leads to better debate, better decisions, and more durable community consensus. I believe we should continue improving h information is shared, how meetings are communicated, and how

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residents are invited into the conversation especially in precincts like ours where turnout has historically been lower.

Why should voters elect you to represent them?
I have served Precinct 8 as a Town Meeting Member since 2011, and over that time I have developed both the experience and perspective necessary to navigate Winchester's increasingly complex challenges. I understand how our decisions affect residents over the long term both financially and structurally, as well as in terms of community character.

Professionally, I lead large organizations, oversee significant budgets, and make high-stakes decisions that require balancing competing priorities. I bring that same analytical approach to Town Meeting: review the facts, understand the fiscal implications, ask thoughtful questions, and vote based on long-term sustainability rather than short-term pressure.

As a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, I also bring a service-oriented mindset — mission focus, accountability, and respect for diverse viewpoints. Town Meeting works best when members listen carefully, deliberate respectfully, and act in the best interest of the entire town.

Winchester faces important decisions on housing, development, and fiscal planning in the coming years. I believe my experience, steady leadership, and commitment to thoughtful governance position me to continue serving Precinct 8 effectively.

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Return to Town Meeting Candidate list.

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2026 TOWN ELECTIONS

13 YEARS OF DATA, ONE SATURDAY: Takeaways from Winchester's override vote and the races that surrounded it

Winchester News reviewed precinct-level election results from every annual town election since 2014 — 13 years of data covering turnout, ballot questions, Select Board races, School Committee contests and Planning Board results — and compared them against the March 21 preliminary numbers. The 2026 results have not yet been certified by Town

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With override rejected, Winchester shifts from campaigning to budget planning

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Voters fill Town Meet across Winchester; f incumbents unseated

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After Winchester voters rejected an $11.5 million Proposition 2 1/2 override on Election Day, March 21, the governing question in town has shifted from persuasion to arithmetic. Select Board member Bill McGonigle, who served on the Yes for Winchester campaign, said the defeat has changed how he approaches

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The biggest shakeup came in Precinct 7, where two officeholders lost in an 11-person contest, matching Precinct 4 for the busiest race.

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Winchester ZBA waives town regulations to move Washington/Swanton project along

Town officials have approved waivers of regulations for a residential/commercial development project at Washington and Swanton streets. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) on March 19 approved the waivers for a 40B project at 278-292 Washington St. and 12 and 16-20 Swanton St. in a special meeting preceding a

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Network for Social Justice to celebrate 35th anniversary

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Network For Social Justice turns 35 this spring! There will be a celebration on Saturday, April 11, from 7-9:30 p.m., at the Sons of Italy, 117 Swanton St., Winchester. Connect with your local friends and neighbors as

March 25, 2026

EVENTS

Winchester Community Music School presents Jazz Jam Session

The following was submitted by the Winchester Community Music School: On Saturday, March 28, join the community at Winchester Community Music School, 407 Highland Ave., for a Jazz Jam Session, an afternoon of fun, spontaneous jazz playing, beginning at 3 p.m. Instrumentalists and vocalists of all skill levels are

March 25, 2026

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